

MANUAL FOR PRIESTHOOD



Ordination Information Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Updated March, 2019

ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD: DISCERNMENT AND FORMATION

INTRODUCTION

In the Book of Common Prayer during the examination of all candidates for the priesthood the Bishop says these words, “You are **to love** and serve the people among whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor.” In the Diocese of Maryland our mission is to be a community of love. Clergy leaders who are ordained as priests have a particular responsibility within the community of faith both to nurture and model that love where they serve. Whether a priest serves a parish church, a street or house church, a school or hospital chapel, priests are charged with celebrating the sacramental ministries of reconciliation, Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist as signs of God’s love for people. Priests also offer God’s blessing to those whom they serve, empowering them by the Spirit to carry Christ’s reconciling love to the world. Being a community of love becomes a missionary action in this diocese when God’s people are equipped by the priest to love God and one another.

Q. What is the ministry of a priest or presbyter?

A. The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and his Body, the Church, particularly as pastor to the people within and outside the communities of faith; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to preach the Gospel; to administer the Sacraments of the New Covenant, especially Baptism and Eucharist; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.

(Adapted from the Catechism, Book of Common Prayer page 856)

Within the historic three-fold ordained ministry of the Church; of deacons, priests and bishops, the priest (or presbyter) is most closely associated with the sacramental ministries of the Church, as well as sharing with the bishop in the oversight of Church. This means that priests, by virtue of their priesthood, are responsible for the formation and nurture of the community gathered around the Table.

The representational language in the Catechism’s definition underscores the priest’s responsibility to make the redemptive love of Christ known to all the world, through preaching, teaching, serving and witnessing. Priests nourish the people they serve sacramentally and pastorally, to strengthen them for their own ministries, both in the Church and in the world outside the Church’s doors.

Priests share with the bishop in overseeing the ministry and mission of the diocese and the wider church. Priests may specifically serve one or more communities of faith, but their ministry extends more broadly into diocesan life, as well as to ecumenical and interfaith communities.

Priests undergo extensive formation, and are expected to undertake continuing education throughout their active ministries. Many priests serve primarily in ministry settings other than a congregation (hospitals, schools, agencies, chaplaincies), but every priest is “resident” in a congregation. Some priests earn their entire livelihood through service to one or more faith communities; other priests (called “worker priests” or “bi-vocational”) make most or all of their livelihood outside the faith community.

Like all ordained people, priests are expected to embody the promises of the Baptismal Covenant with integrity, devotion and faithfulness as well as other characteristics of effective ordained leadership that the Commission on Ministry has identified. **See “General Attributes and Qualities of Ordained Leaders”, Appendix A.**

EARLY STEPS IN RESPONDING TO AN EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S CALL

PHASE ONE STEPS: Exploration and Parish-level Discernment

1. Conversation(s) with the Priest who oversees the faith community in which the seeker worships. A seeker is an adult communicant in good standing with a commitment to ministry and the church. The priest may develop a plan (readings, retreats, spiritual direction, Exploring for Ministry, etc.) for the seeker before or after a meeting with the Canon for Discernment.
2. Meeting with the Canon for Discernment

The Canon for Discernment takes extensive notes, including an outline of next steps and begins a file.

Seeker sends relevant Life History material for the file to the Canon for Discernment.

3. Formation of a Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) who are members chosen by the priest in consultation with seeker (may include 1-2 non-parish members if appropriate)

PDC members must be faithful in worship, known for integrity and mature Christians.

4. PDC's purpose is to listen deeply, ask probing questions, and listen/feel for the movement of the Holy Spirit, to participate as one of the elements in the extensive discernment process. See The **MINISTRY OF A PARISH DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE (PDC) – Appendix B.**

5. If inexperienced, PDC are designated trainers identified by the COM and the Canon for Discernment, who are available for ongoing consultation as needed.

6. Final Report of the PDC is a narrative of the meetings, conversations, prayer and Bible reflection. The Final Report is signed by the PDC and the seeker. Copies are sent to the Canon for Discernment, the Priest of that congregation, and the Wardens of that (potentially) sponsoring congregation. Care must be taken in sharing the PDC Report with the Vestry, to preserve the privacy of the seeker.

PHASE TWO STEPS: Diocesan Discernment Programs

- 2.1. In consultation between the Canon for Discernment, priest and seeker, and relevant others, determination is made about next steps in faithful response. Seeker may apply for Exploring Baptismal Ministry (EBM), Discerning Ordained Vocation (DOV) or may, under guidance of the Priest in the faith community, undertake other training and/or explore discerning avenues.

At this point, the Vestry/Wardens/Priest may “nominate” the seeker for entry into further discernment at the diocesan level.

The usual path of discernment at the diocesan level is a two-year process that begins with EBM. At the discretion of the Canon for Discernment, persons with relevant previous experience in discerning may be exempted from EBM and enroll directly into DOV.

2.2. Application for EBM requires a letter of support from the priest, who may also request a letter of support from the Vestry, along with other application materials. At the conclusion of EBM, persons meet again with the Canon for Discernment and members of the COM, for discussion and determination of next steps, which may or may not include an application to DOV.

2.3. Application for DOV requires Vestry endorsement. The Vestry will rely on the PDC's report and on whatever interview process they choose in order to exercise their responsibility for signing the Vestry endorsement. It is during DOV that the canonical steps of Psychological Testing and Exam, Medical Exam, Background Check, Sex Offender Records Check, Reference Check, Formal canonical endorsement by the Vestry, and Priest's Endorsement Letter (EL) are accomplished. See attached **SPONSORING PRIEST'S ENDORSEMENT LETTER**.

2.4. During DOV, a significant parish internship is undertaken over several months at a congregation chosen from the diocesan list of "Teaching Parishes", where there is confidence that the clergy are gifted with the charism of supervision, the congregation owns its vocation as a "Teaching Congregation", and the geographic and contextual realities for an early-stage internship are challenging but favorable.

About half-way through that parish internship, the three DOV Mentors (a deacon, a priest and a layperson) often with the Canon for Discernment, intentionally confer by telephone conference with the priest of each parish internship site as to progress, problems and any fine-tuning that may be needed.

For each DOV Internship, there is a parish lay committee appointed from the congregation's membership, to regularly meet with and give feedback to the DOV intern. There are other specific requirements about the DOV parish internship (hours to be spent, number of preaching opportunities, pastoral visits, other exposure experiences), all of which are defined and discussed with the DOV participants at their monthly meetings. The parish lay committee provides its own report at the conclusion of the DOV parish internship.

2.5. The Canon for Discernment visits each of the programs (EBM and DOV) at least once during the program year, and remains in contact with the mentors in both programs.

2.6. Near the conclusion of DOV, the nominee may apply for Postulancy. Following a meeting with the Canon for Discernment, who reviews all data and undertakes additional conversations as appropriate, the nominee MAY be referred to the COM for a Postulancy Interview.

2.7. COM Interview Days are usually held three to four times a year on scheduled days at the Diocesan Center. Each Interview Day begins with worship. Nominees are interviewed by 2 or 3 small groups of COM members.

At the end of the interview day, COM members meet for prayerful discussion about each nominee and send a report to the Bishop. The COM may report:

- a. We recommend enrollment as a Postulant for Holy Orders now.
- b. We recommend further discernment about Baptismal Ministry.
- c. We recommend specific experiences of personal, psychological and/or spiritual growth, with a second Postulancy Interview at a later point in time.
- d. COM Chair calls the nominee within 24 hours to inform him/her/them of COM's recommendation.

2.8 The Bishop receives the results of the COM report and the nominee contacts the Bishop for a personal meeting to review the report. In conversation with the nominee, the Bishop determines next steps for each nominee.

2.9. Enrollment as a Postulant, if recommended

- a. The Postulant-elect confers with the Bishop, signs the **POSTULANCY AGREEMENT (Form 2)**, receives information about the Ember Letter requirements, and formally accepts the canonical status of Postulant for Holy Orders.
- b. The Masters in Divinity is the normative degree for priestly formation, though exceptions are made with multiple consultations at every level. The M.Div. is taken at an approved seminary, on a full-time or part-time basis. Seminarians may live on or near campus, commute between home and seminary, or take a low-residency program, with "intensives" in residence throughout the year.
- c. The Deacon Formation Program (DFP) is the diocesan process for Diaconal formation. The DFP is an adult-learning model of formation, with benchmarks and flexibility around the presentation of a Portfolio, the establishment of a road-map called an Individual Formation Plan (IFP) with the support of a Deacon Mentor.

The Archdeacon for Formation will assign a Deacon Mentor to each Postulant. The Deacon Mentor assists the Postulant throughout all phases of the DFP, assuring the development of an appropriate IFP and helping to find resources and programs to fulfill the IFP.

2.10. At the discretion of the Canon for Discernment, and in consultation with the Diocesan Bishop, some of these steps may be foreshortened or altered, providing compliance with all diocesan and national church canons, which are always upheld.

2.11. As Postulants progress in their formation (either in seminary or in DFP), they are bound by the Ember Day discipline, through which a letter is written to the Canon for Discernment four times per year. These letters are shared with the Diocesan Bishop.

2.12. The Canon for Discernment receives periodic reports on the postulant's progress in formation, through a reporting schedule developed between the Bishop and DFP/seminary personnel.

NOTE: At this point, the two formation avenues diverge significantly. To minimize confusion, two manuals are available.

The Deacon Manual spells out in detail the components and steps in the Deacon Formation Program.

The Priest Manual spells out the general components and steps in the priestly formation process, recognizing that practices/requirements differ from one seminary to another.

+CRK 030118

DIOCESE OF MARYLAND DISCERNMENT TRAINING

Decision-making (Democratic Principles) vs. Discernment (Spiritual Principles)

Both these processes are useful and faithful means of vocational guidance. There is no ranking or favoring implied in any of our discussions or considerations.

Some matters are best considered through decision-making, other matters by discernment. Generally, the greater the impact (and the longer-term the impact), the more useful discernment is as opposed to democratic decision-making.

<u>Decision-making</u>	<u>Discernment</u>
Depends on stake-holding by invested participants	Depends on neutrality as to outcome
Should be representative in membership	Must be people of prayer/openness
Drives towards a decision	Drives towards listening, weighing
Oriented to the result	Oriented to the process
Results in voting up or down	Results in an emerging consensus
Considers choices in a binary (yes/no) way	Considers a range of options
Listens to the voices in the discussion	Also listens for the Holy Spirit
Often happens faster, quelling anxiety	Often happens slower, re yearning
Considers the immediate question	Considers the past, present, future
Attends to majority voices	Attends to minority voices
Moves quickly to resolution	Continues to gather data
Comes to a decision and announces	Iterative process, checks consensus
Grounded in logic	Grounded in prayer, listening
Feels bound by realities	Guided, not confined, by realities
Depends on small group of leaders	Involves larger group of the whole
Honors the rational work of leaders	Honors leaders as visionaries

WHEN GOD REALLY NUDGES US (Elbow in the Ribs experience)

As we walk, in our several capacities, with those who feel God's nudge (God's call, God's "elbow in my ribs") over time, our OWN call is to listen deeply and speak honestly. We shape conversations that help people take a deep and courageous dive into their experience of God. A DIVINE NUDGE ISN'T JUST ABOUT BEING ORDAINED OR NOT; IT'S FAR MORE PROFOUND THAN THAT.

Generally, Western Christendom has identified four avenues of response to God's nudge. The call of God is revealed and understood through our relationships within the Body of Christ.

1. Monastic is not about monasteries and long robes. In its fullest sense, monasticism is living intentionality around patterns and practices of prayer, while being accountable to a community. Monasticism includes the discipline of becoming healthier in body, mind and spirit: undergoing psychotherapy, entering into recovery, adopting a physical discipline of exercise, cultivating a creative discipline, learning a new language, or seeking a coach/mentor to gain a new skill or sharpen a current skill.
2. An intentional ("consecrated") Lay Ministry, towards which a person directs their learning and formation in areas such as: church musician, parish coordinator, youth group leader, attorney for end of life issues, leader of overseas mission trips, J2A leader, Cursillo, vestry member, lay Eucharistic minister, warden, social outreach worker.
3. Ordination as a Deacon, servant leader ministry. A separate and equal order, NOT a reward. The diaconate is for extensive lay ministry. Under authority, with both bishop and local person exercising oversight. Primarily centered in the Towel, the Book and the Door, symbols of a Deacon's ministry. Skill development is life-long, along a broad spectrum of servanthood, church/world partnerships, inspiring and mentoring the faithful in exercising their baptismal diaconate. Preparation for this ministry requires attendance in a diocesan formation program.
4. Ordination as a Priest, a sacramental, teaching, governing and pastoral ministry. Expressed in many ways, but primarily centered on the altar and the pulpit. Preparation for this Ministry, includes Seminary work, will involve study and learning, as this is a teaching role. A mastery of content will be expected. A spectrum of priestly skills, especially as pastor, community-builder, spiritual guide and teacher, are cultivated and monitored throughout her/his vocational life.

As we take seriously the calls and journeys of those who come to us, we can joyfully own all these four paths as our responsibility to affirm and support. One path is not holier than another. Our responsibility is to help discern what path the Holy Spirit is calling each person to travel, be it 1, 2, 3 or 4 — or some combination of these — at THIS MOMENT on the journey.

God honors each path, and says a divine YES! to each vocation. Our companioning call is not binary (are you called to be ordained or not?) but multivalent, given these four broad general overlapping avenues which are always under consideration in vocational ("calling") discernment. Our job is always to say "yes!" to anyone who comes to us. That may involve saying a no to a particular call, but the faithful response to God's nudge is always "yes."

APPLYING FOR POSTULANCY: THE FIRST CANONICAL STEP

Prior to reaching this step, the Applicant will have fulfilled the relevant canonical prerequisites as specified in the Canons of the Episcopal Church:

1. A minimum of 12 months as member, faithful worshipper, and giver of record in an Episcopal congregation (or recognized Episcopal Worshipping Community) in the Diocese of Maryland.
2. This Church/Worshipping Community may become the “Sponsoring Congregation of Record” for Postulancy Application and throughout the ordination process.
3. Intentional conversations, over a period of several months, with the Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge of said congregation regarding one’s vocational call, spiritual journey and relevant experiences to date **(see Appendix A)**. Concurrently, at least one personal meeting with the Diocesan Bishop or the Canon for Discernment should be taking place.
4. Discernment at the Parish/Faith Community Level: The Parish Discernment Committee (PDC), appointed by the Priest in consultation with the Applicant, has completed a local discernment process of at least several weeks’ duration **(Appendix B)** and presented their report to the Diocesan Bishop or the Canon for Discernment.
5. Discernment at the diocesan level, normatively through faithful participation in the 2-year diocesan discernment program:

Year One: **Exploring Baptismal Ministry (EBM)**, an 8-month program of monthly meetings with assigned readings and experiential components.

Year Two: **Discerning Ordained Vocation (DOV)**, an 8-month program of monthly meetings, including Internship in a Teaching Congregation (not the Sponsoring Congregation). This requires stepping away from regular participation in the Sponsoring Congregation for that period of time.

6. Please note also that the second year of diocesan discernment (DOV) includes, during the course of DOV:

- a. canonically required psychological testing and screening,
- b. medical screening,
- c. background check (includes criminal records and credit checks) and
- d. reference checks

Which must be completed before the Application for Postulancy is submitted for a Postulancy Interview with the Commission of Ministry (COM). The fee for DOV includes these extra costs.

7. The reports from the EBM mentors are part of the material presented in the Application for Postulancy.
8. Approval of the DOV mentors is required to proceed to Application for Postulancy.

The Application for Postulancy, which is usually completed near the end of DOV, includes the reports from the above screenings/checks, endorsement from the Vestry and Priest of the Sponsoring Congregation (see Form 1) and also an up-to-date SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY. Don’t hesitate to ask questions; contact Eve Wayne (ewayne@episcopalmaryland.org).

**ENDORSEMENT LETTER FOR POSTULANCY/CANDIDACY FROM
RECTOR, VICAR OR PRIEST-IN-CHARGE OF THE SPONSORING CONGREGATION**

The Endorsement Letter (EL) is an important element of the canonical process of discernment and screening for admission to Postulancy/Candidacy for Holy Orders (Vocational Deacon or Priest).

As a canonical document, an EL is part of the permanent file for that person. If there is ever a question about that person's fitness, before or after ordination, your EL will be part of the material examined. Therefore, the EL is more than a personal or character reference, or a testament to your kindly feelings about this person. It has permanent canonical weight throughout the person's ministry.

In your EL, please be sure to cover the following items:

1. How long and how well you have known the person? Over what period of time?
2. How many conversations with this person - and over how long a time period - have been specifically about vocation to ordained ministry?
3. What roles has the person played in the life of the sponsoring parish, and how do you see relevant gifts for religious leadership evident in the exercise of those roles? Give specific examples you have seen in this person's life within your congregation.
4. How do you assess the person's family in terms of healthy family functioning, support for the person, and fitness/readiness for the stresses of life as a clergy family?
5. What are the person's gifts and strengths, and how have you seen them in action? Remember we are asking for gifts and strengths and how they have been evident.
6. What do you see as "growing edges" and challenges in this person's development towards wholeness? This is an important element to include in your EL; none of us is "finished" yet.
7. If you or a family member needed the ministry of an ordained person, in a time of crisis, could you imagine this person meeting those needs?
8. If you have concerns about this person, which you would like to discuss in a private conversation, notify the Canon for Discernment by email (msulerud@episcopalmaryland.org).
9. If you have information about the person which you believe - if it emerges - would jeopardize their ministerial integrity and/or the well-being of the church, you are obligated to provide it.
10. Can you see this person as a trusted colleague in ordained ministry? In your EL, describe your sense of how this person will function as a colleague in ministry.

Thank you for undertaking this important responsibility.

POSTULANCY AGREEMENT WITH THE DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

1. I understand Postulancy is a canonical status in the Episcopal Church (Title III.6.3, III 8:3) and that I will abide by the policies of liturgical functioning (Appendix E).
2. I understand that I may eventually take ordination vows, and I begin now to study those vows, pray over them, and intentionally begin living by them.
3. I will strive to be a faithful representative of the Episcopal Church in all my interactions.
4. I will speak about issues/positions of the Episcopal Church accurately and fairly. Where I disagree with my Church, I will distinguish my position from that of my Church.
5. I will strive for directness in communication, refrain from triangulation, and set a good example to others. I will refrain from gossip and speculation, seeking to be a person of truth.
6. I will faithfully give to the church as a good steward.
7. I will faithfully fulfill the directions and godly counsel of my bishops and those in authority; if I choose to dissent, I will do so charitably and openly. In case of dissent, I will discuss the matter directly with the bishop(s) or other person(s) having authority.
8. I will seek always to fulfill the vows of the Baptismal Covenant, before and after I am ordained. I will pursue a Rule of Life, and commit myself to a life of prayer and growth.
9. I agree to pursue the required learnings, trainings, and opportunities which will help me to prepare for leadership in the Episcopal Church, and will commit myself to lifelong formation.
10. I will maintain regular contact with the Diocesan Bishop and the Canon for Discernment, being faithful and prompt in submitting Ember Letters and completing the required steps of my ordination process.
11. I will stay informed. I will regularly read the Episcopal Church website, the diocesan website, subscribe to the e-mail news, and attend diocesan events insofar as I am able. I have studied, and will continue to refer to, the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Maryland and of the Episcopal Church, and the Outline of the Faith (the Catechism - Book of Common Prayer pp 845-862), and the Clergy Manual of the Diocese of Maryland (copy of which I have received).
12. We respect the dignity of every human being. I will avoid websites, chat rooms and social media which promote values contrary to the Gospel, and will not post or forward their material.
13. I recognize that my canonical status places me in a pastoral relationship with my bishop(s) thus I acknowledge my obligation to inform the bishop(s) of major life circumstances (pregnancy, birth, death of a family member, marital difficulties, change in occupation, serious medical or psychiatric illness, adoption of a child) so they may pray for me and offer pastoral care.

_____ Signature of Postulant Date _____

_____ Signature of Bishop Date _____

WHAT IS A BI-VOCATIONAL PRIEST?

Literally, this means "two vocations", two livelihoods. A priest who serves two congregations is not a bi-vocational priest. She/he has one vocation exercised in two locations. Bi-vocational Ministry is also called "tent maker" ministry after the example of St Paul (Acts 18:3).

A priest who is bi-vocational earns a portion, but not the whole, of his/her livelihood in a compensated ministry capacity and earns another portion of her/his livelihood in other work. Bi-vocational priests in the Episcopal Church include people who earn a portion (or all) of their livelihood in these and many fields:

- Teachers (including substitute teaching), Community College faculty, adjunct college faculty
- Counselors, Social Workers, Hospice Workers, Human Resources professionals
- Chaplains, Patient Care Advocates, Community Health Workers
- Small business owners/ entrepreneurs/non-profit organizations
- Farm workers, Lobstermen, Sailing Instructors, Environmentalists
- Textile Artists/Woodworkers/Artisans/Musicians/Architects/Potters
- Nurses, Med Techs, X-ray techs, Emergency Medical Technicians
- Editors, authors, translators, bookstore owners
- Web site designer, photographer, graphic artist
- Real estate agent, travel agent, interior decorator, landscape designer
- Attorneys, paralegals, immigration lawyers, public interest advocates
- Youth workers, youth-serving facilities staff, job trainers
- Retired, on pension from another employment situation (self or spouse)

Research and careful projections tell us that 75% or more of active clergy, who will be working 10 years from now, will be bi-vocational. Congregations served by a bi-vocational priest have work to do on their expectations of the priest, especially if they are stepping from a full-time priest to a part-time priest. Priests likewise have work to do on framing/managing those expectations within themselves. Having a part-time priest does not inevitably lead to decline. There are congregations thriving with bi-vocational clergy and congregations declining with full-time clergy.

Some dioceses define a "region" or "deanery" which is non-geographic, and is intended to provide a collegial community for bi-vocational priests. Meeting times and communication methods are adjusted in this "deanery" to accommodate bi-vocational priests. Some dioceses have developed special training programs for people who will be bi-vocational priests for the duration of their ministry (e.g., Iona School for Ministry in the Diocese of Texas, and a similar school in the Diocese of Alabama). Many bi-vocational priests move from FT ministry to bi-vocational ministry later in life, or when circumstances (e.g. parenthood, graduate study, family responsibilities) emerge.

THE SEMINARY JOURNEY IN PRIESTLY FORMATION

Every seminary is different as to culture, explicit graduation requirements, implicit (sometimes unspoken) graduation requirements, expectations for extra-curricular involvement, opportunities for leadership and/or participation in seminary organizations, etc. Seminary faculty and staff include people who are contemporary and self-aware.

In this regard, a seminary is similar to a parish where you begin serving in your ordained ministry. Your job is to study the context, and discern how you will navigate it. For many people, seminary is a happy “bubble” where daily worship opportunities are many, faculty members are supportive and affirming, and fellow students are interesting and accepting. Others experience seminary very differently, especially those who have a vocation to be “system challengers.” Seminaries are like everything else in our Episcopal Church — they are a blend of sinful and holy, resistant and aware. In other words, seminaries are like the Episcopal Church writ large.

As you move through seminary, here are some comments intended to be helpful:

1. In order to receive the M.Div. degree which your seminary grants, you will need to complete the curriculum they establish. Exceptions to that defined curriculum are rare. The diocese which sponsors you hopes not to be triangulated into disputes with your seminary about curricular requirements.

2. The Diocese of Maryland does NOT require that seminarians take:

A Biblical language (Hebrew or Greek), though that can be helpful

A second year of Field Education (aka Congregational Internship)

3. The Diocese of Maryland strongly hopes that all its priestly seminarians:

Have/gain mastery of a second language; our church speaks multiple languages!

Are prepared to earn some or all of their livelihood apart from parish ministry

Take Cross-cultural training while in seminary, preferably out of the US.

Take opportunity in seminary to venture beyond their “comfort zones”

Arrange family finances (and Financial Aid) to graduate with minimal debt

4. One Basic Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is required of all in priestly formation. The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) lists accredited programs on its web site. The basic unit can be taken on a full-time basis (usually in the summer), or as an “Extended Unit” on a part-time basis for the duration of the academic year.

It is acceptable, as of 9/1/18, to complete the Spiritual Support training at Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC) as **2/3** of this required clinical training.

It is possible, through GBMC, to take additional clinical hours at GBMC, through the program called SMT - Supervised Ministerial Training. 300 hours of clinical training is required for people being

formed for the priesthood. The basic GBMC program includes only 200 hours. Priestly formation, beginning 9/1/18, requires 300 hours of clinical training.

5. We expect at least one faculty evaluation on each student in seminary, during their seminary time. This is usually done in the Middler Year, and is a joint project of the faculty and the student. Please be sure this evaluation is undertaken and is submitted to our diocesan offices.

6. All Maryland seminarians are eligible for a diocesan grant of \$5000 per year, provided they are enrolled in full-time seminary study. Seminarians are encouraged to work with the Financial Aid office at their seminary to obtain the maximum assistance for seminary studies.

7. Every Episcopalian is entitled to apply for and enroll in seminary coursework, according to the policies of each seminary. Those who are in formation for ordination will also be progressing through the Commission on Ministry (COM) canonical horizons of Postulancy and Candidacy, in addition to undertaking their seminary study.

8. There are various ways to undertake seminary study. Increasingly, the church is recognizing the need to be flexible in how seminary education is “packaged.” There are Distance Learning models, with regular on-campus Intensives. It is acceptable to undertake some seminary work locally (for example, at the Ecumenical Institute of St Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore) and then transfer credits towards an M.Div. at another seminary. We accept the M.Div. from seminaries other than Episcopal ones, but require additional work in Episcopal-specific areas such as Prayer Book and Liturgy, the English Reformation, and Historical Theology.

9. All those in formation for the priesthood, whatever program they have pursued, will take the General Ordination Exam (GOE), administered in January of each year. Cost of the GOE is shared between the student, the sponsoring congregation, and the Commission on Ministry.

10. All Postulants and Candidates are required to communicate with the Canon for Discernment four times each year at the Ember Seasons. This is a firm expectation for everyone in formation.
See Appendix D.

GENERAL ATTRIBUTES AND QUALITIES OF ORDAINED LEADERS

- Personal Faith in God through Jesus Christ that is living, growing in depth and healthy:
 - Practicing a Rule of Life that includes personal and corporate prayer, study of scripture, spiritual direction, and personal stewardship
 - Exhibiting a passion for God's mission
 - Participating and rooted in an Episcopal congregation, informed by and respectful of Anglican traditions and identity
 - Displaying an appreciation of cultural contexts that shape one's own and others' faith
 - Being an example in private and public ways of life that model Christian virtues by example
- Effective facilitator of the Christian faith in words, deeds, and actions:
 - Ability to write and speak persuasively, including sensitivity to community
 - Ability to articulate the gospel to move people for transformational action
 - Ability to communicate and gather feedback using clear and consistent processes
 - Skill in inspiring faithfulness through liturgy
 - Identifiably Christian in the public sphere
- Developer of communities of faith:
 - Proven capacity for gathering, organizing, and inspiring people in mission and helping to extend that vision
 - Positive regard for the capacities of people in the congregation
 - Savvy sense of networks of influence in congregations and local communities
 - Entrepreneurial spirit
 - Consensus builder
 - The ability to cultivate healthy patterns of interaction among people in community, including accountability through structures of authority
 - Skills, gifts, and graces to collaboratively lead the church in mission through liturgy, preaching, spiritual and pastoral guidance, Christian formation, social outreach, and evangelism
 - The ability to encourage, empower, and mentor lay leadership to live into the Baptismal Covenant
- Emotionally mature leadership:
 - Displays assertiveness and decisiveness, blended with collaborative interest in others
 - Capacity to anticipate conflict and work effectively through it
 - Ability to listen deeply to others and respond constructively
 - Ability to lead with authority, recognizing and honoring the authority of others
 - Acts with awareness and self-awareness of one's impact on others in relationships and leadership roles
- Institutional connection: Recognition and understanding that ordained ministry brings canonical and institutional constraints.

THE MINISTRY OF A PARISH DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE (PDC)

We believe that people experiencing a persistent “call” from the Holy Spirit deserve the reverent attention of the Church in these ways:

- Companionship, both affirming and challenging
- Deep listening
- Probing questions and conversation
- Candid feedback
- Safe space to share and explore the working of the Spirit
- Reverence for the story of a person’s life

We believe that all orders of ministry (lay people, bishops, priests and deacons) are called by God to serve one another and with one another as equal partners in the work of the Church on earth. Our Episcopal spirituality and polity holds Baptism as the foundational identity through which all members stand on the level playing field at the foot of the Cross.

Lay people have an obligation to exercise their authority and responsibility in identifying people whose gifts, temperament and spirituality are consistent with the Church’s ordained ministries. This role in vocational discernment does not belong to priests or bishops, but to the entire people of God.

A Parish Discernment Committee (PDC), therefore, is composed of faithful lay people (not clergy). There should never be any clergy folks present in a PDC meeting. Clergy have their own particular canonical relationship with folks discerning a call to ordained ministry, and they should be meeting with those people regularly.

Members of the PDC are members of the laity who have devoted themselves to “work, pray and give” in support of God’s Mission of Reconciliation (Book of Common Prayer pages 855-856). They understand the Episcopal Church, they are able to keep confidences, and they are not afraid to ask hard questions or go deep in conversations on spiritual/faith issues.

A PDC is typically 4-5 people, who are faithful in worship, known to be leaders who consistently seek the best interest of their congregation (rather than personal agendas), who are respected as people of depth and spiritual integrity. At each meeting of the PDC, one member takes the role of scribe (taking notes) and one member takes the role of facilitator (which includes leading the Bible study/reflection at the beginning of each meeting, and closing the meeting with summary reflection). All members of the PDC rotate these roles.

Each meeting of a Discernment Committee with a discerner or seeker has a defined shape and flow:

- Approximately 20 minutes of Bible study and reflection, including a period of communal silence. The Committee members take turns facilitating this time of study and reflection.

- 60-90 minutes of conversation with the discerner, focusing the conversation around one or two of the following themes which comprise the Committee’s work:

Spiritual Autobiography

Experience of “call” over time

Spiritual disciplines/practices: reading, retreats, spiritual direction, worship

Ministries exercised or underway: vestry, study, liturgical, pastoral, etc.

Self-awareness: growing edges, personal goals, particular gifts, challenges

Perceptions/understandings of the relevant order of ministry

How will time be set aside for training/formation?

How do you understand, study and reflect on Scripture?

Do you have a favorite Bible passage? If so, why is it a favorite?

Who is Jesus Christ to you? How do you experience Jesus most fully?

What are the experiences of death and resurrection in your life?

Where is the realest and greatest love present in your life?

Personal circumstances: family, finances, livelihood, self-care

As the conversation progresses, listen not only to the content of the answers but also “feel” for the movement of the Holy Spirit. Do not hesitate to ask “hard” questions, or to lovingly challenge the discernee, or to use follow-up questions to clarify or open up the discussion.

Approximately 15 minutes of summary reflection to close the meeting:

When/how did each of us feel the Spirit’s presence most vividly?

What stands out in my memory as a highlight of this meeting?

What questions/topics do I want to identify for further discussion?

What counsel do I have for the discernee going forward?

What resources/advice/help would help the PDC going forward?

Closing Prayer (prepared and led by facilitator for that meeting)

Therefore, each meeting of the PDC with a discerner is about 2.5 hours. A full PDC process is a minimum of 4 meetings. It is possible to “double up” meetings on a given day (with an ample break between). Some PDCs spend a day together: one 2.5 hour session, then lunch followed by another 2.5 hour session. We recommend that there be “reflection” space of at least six weeks for the entire process to be accomplished.

THE “OUTCOME” OF THE PDC MEETINGS

By compiling all the notes taken at each meeting, along with additions/editing from the whole PDC, a Final Report is prepared for the Canon for Discernment. This final report also names the members of the PDC, the dates/times of meeting, and the summary reflection from all the summary reflections.

The PDC is asked to tell the story of their meetings with the discerner, and identify the moments when members felt the presence of the Holy Spirit (evidenced by the 7-fold gifts of the Spirit; study Galatians 5:16 - 26).

It is important that the final report be candid and show evidence of careful and prayerful screening. A copy of this final report is made available to the discerner, before it is sent to

the Canon for Discernment. The discerner may choose to prepare and submit his/her own comments and reflections.

The PDC is NOT asked to “vote” or determine whether or not the discerner is called to be ordained a deacon or a priest. It is important for PDCs to be liberated from making an “up or down” binary conclusion. The PDC is one piece of a larger discernment process, and all pieces of that discernment process are gathered and presented to the Commission on Ministry (COM) and the Canon for Discernment, who consider all material in screening people for COM interviews.

OTHER NOTES on the Process

If a PDC, or any member thereof, feels unable to continue in their work, the Canon for Discernment must be informed at once. Depending on where the PDC is in the course of their work, the priest of that sponsoring congregation may appoint another person to the PDC. If the PDC’s work is fairly far-along, the PDC may finish its work with the reduced number of members.

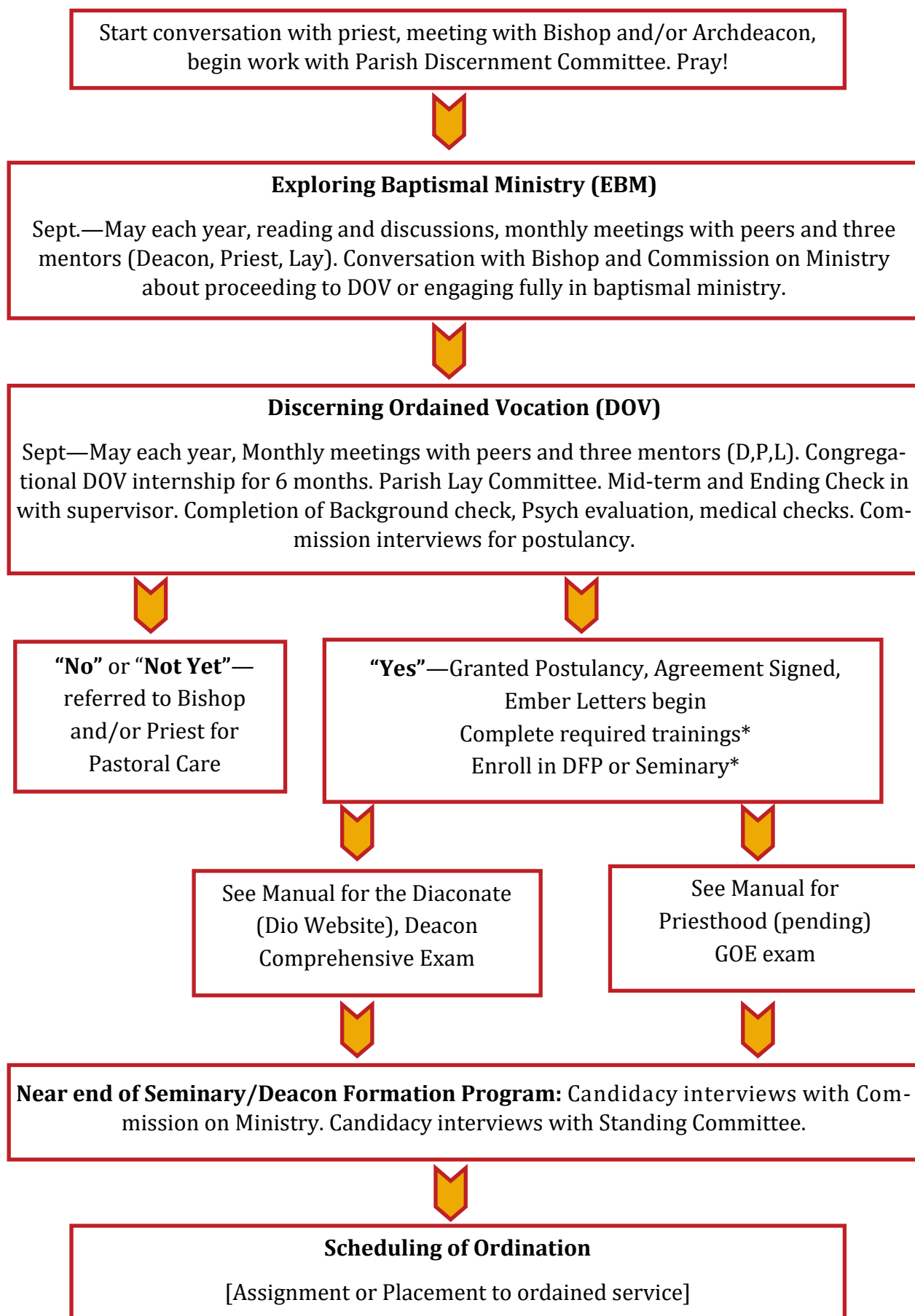
If a PDC needs advice or trouble-shooting or further training, the Canon for Discernment is to be contacted to provide support and resources. Don’t hesitate to be in touch anytime with any questions or concerns.

If the Vestry/Bishop’s Committee/Advisory Board is unable to trust/endorse the work/report of the PDC, a meeting will be scheduled for further discussion.

If there is any matter which jeopardizes the prayerful work of the PDC, let us know!

FORMAT ON PROCESS FLOWCHART

*These required diocesan trainings **must** be completed by the time of enrollment in DFP or Seminary: *Seeing the Face of God, Safe Church, and Domestic Violence Awareness.*



EMBER DAYS and EMBER LETTERS

EMBER DAYS happen four times a year, and have long been set aside for prayer and special attention regarding the ordained ministry of the Church. These days have been traditional times for bishops and people in formation to be in touch. Ember Days are part of the Liturgical Calendar of our Church, and they occur in sets of three at four specific times of the year. Ember Days are collectively called "Embertide." They are Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of the weeks:

Between Advent Two and Advent Three

Between Lent One and Lent Two

Between Pentecost and Trinity Sunday

The week beginning on the first Sunday after Holy Cross Day (September 14).

Generally speaking then, Ember Days occur in February, June, September and December.

EMBER LETTERS

Your Ember Letters come to the Canon for Discernment, and are due within two weeks after each Embertide; earlier is fine too! These letters are shared with Bishop Sutton. In your Ember Letter, please report on the four traditional areas of formation:

A. Spiritual Growth:

Your daily practice or Rule of Life, your attendance at corporate worship, any particular spiritual reading you have done, participation in retreats or other programs of spiritual growth, work with a spiritual director, new spiritual horizons you are drawn to, your use of Scripture in your prayer, ecumenical or interfaith experiences, and anything else which you would put in the "Spiritual Growth" category.

B. Family Matters:

How is your family constituted? What family activities or special events have happened in the last few months? How is your family adapting to your pattern of study, your rhythm of presence and absence, your energy level? Are there any family milestones/transitions in the recent past or coming up in the future? Have there been losses of loved ones? What has been challenging in this general area of Family Matters; how have you and your family dealt with those challenges? How would you describe your financial stability at present?

C. Personal Matters:

Have you experienced any health issues in the last few months? If so, please include some information on how you're managing those issues. How do you engage in regular exercise? What do you do that brings relaxation, playfulness and fun into your life? What hobbies are

you pursuing as you engage in your formation? Has a medical provider urged you to undertake a particular fitness or wellness or recovery program?

D. Vocational Matters:

What are the content areas you're studying now? How does it go with the pace of your studies? What practical ministry experiences are part of your life at the moment (Field Ed? Worship and service at a home parish? Volunteering for ministry-related activities?). Have you identified some growing edges in your vocational growth towards ministry as a deacon or priest? What are your peer relationships like? How are your relationships with faculty members, mentors, supervisors and others to whom you are accountable?

Please always submit your Ember Letters to the Canon for Discernment electronically as a Word, Pages, or PDF file (msulerud@episcopalmaryland.org). The Ember Letters become a part of your permanent formation file, they are not normally read by anyone but me. If you have something you wish to say in confidence, feel free to communicate with Canon Sulerud directly by phone (410) 467-1399.

Once a year, around one of the Ember Days, please schedule a face-to-face "Ember Meeting" with the Canon for Discernment or substitute an intentional phone conference.

Staying in Touch:

Our commitment is to reply to your Ember Letters within three weeks. A reply may be brief, but a reply will be made. Please be prompt in sending in your Ember Letters, so that the calendar can be arranged to make time for prompt replies to you. Please also communicate in a timely manner about "business items" which crop up during your formation process (requests for letters of reference, feedback on a sermon or paper, signing of forms, etc.).

Our hope is that your Ember Letters afford you an opportunity to step back a bit, and reflect on your journey to ordination. This is a privileged opportunity to walk with you on that journey with grace.

The Rev. Mary Sulerud
Canon for Discernment & Congregational Vitality
Email: msulerud@episcopalmaryland.org

POLICIES FOR LITURGICAL FUNCTIONING AS POSTULANT OR CANDIDATE

The Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland, has issued the following Internship guidelines which apply to Congregational Internships in both Discerning Ordained Vocation (DOV) and in Deacon Formation Program (DFP). These guidelines were first established in 2012 and have been renewed each year thereafter:

Neither an intern nor a field work education student is to function as ordained clergy, so do not use Postulants or Candidates (for the diaconate or the priesthood) or any lay person to:

1. Set the Table, although they are encouraged to assist the Celebrant as any lay liturgical altar server might do
2. Proclaim the Gospel in the Eucharistic liturgy, unless a special exception is made. These exceptions are limited to matters of language; by permission of the Bishop, anyone can proclaim the Gospel if there is a language barrier to be overcome
3. Invite the worshipping community to Confession
4. Pronounce the Dismissal at the end of the liturgy

Virtually any ministry which can be exercised by lay persons may be exercised by those seeking ordination.

Ample opportunity is given during priestly and diaconal formation for these liturgical functions to be taught and learned. There is no need to pre-empt the normal course of training in order to learn what one has to do in the liturgy once ordained.